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THE MONGOL TRANSFORMATION: FROM THE STEPPE TO EURASIAN EMPIRE[1]

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the rise of the Mongol Empire in its Inner Asian context, looking for evolutionary versus revolutionary features of the Mongol imperial enterprise. It then assesses the Mongol impact on Eurasia from three angles: the Mongol contributions to Eurasian integration; their impact on the Eurasian geo-political balance; and the long-term impact of their statecraft on the different regions over which they ruled.

What event or occurrence has been more notable than the beginning of the government of Chinggis Khan, that it should be considered a new era?
(Rashīd al-Dīn)[2]

The Mongol conquests have been defined as the last chapter of the Eurasian transformations of the tenth-thirteenth centuries. Yet with the same, or even better, justification they can also be regarded as the first chapter of a new era, perhaps the early-modern one.[3] Certainly the impact of the Mongol period was strongly felt in the post-thirteenth century world as well. Before addressing the issue of Mongol legacy on Eurasia, however, I will analyze the Inner Asian background of the

[1] I would like to thank Thomas T. Allsen, Reuven Amitai and Peter Jackson for their valuable comments on earlier drafts. This study was supported by grant 818/03 of the Israel Academy of Sciences.

[2] Rashīd al-Dīn (d. 1317), *Jāmic al-tawārīkh*, 2 vols, ed. B. Karīmī (Tehran:Iqbāl, 1338/1959), 1:16. The translation follows D. O. Morgan, *Medieval Persia* (London:Longman, 1988), 51.

[3] Thomas T. Allsen, "Ever Closer Encounters: The Appropriation of Culture and the Apportionment of Peoples in the Mongol Empire," *Journal of Early Modern History*, 1 (1997), 2-23; Sanjay Subrahmanyan, "Connected Histories: Early Modern Eurasia," *Modern Asian Studies*, 31 (1997), 737; see also, e.g., *Towards an Integrated History of Eurasian Civilization, 1200-1700*, Reader for the NEH Summer 2002 Institute (Harvard University, 2002); David R. Ringrose, *Expansion and Global Interaction, 1200-1700* (New York: Longman, 2001); Robert Tignor et al. *Worlds Together Worlds Apart: A History of the Modern World from the Mongol Empire to the Present* (New York: W. W. Norton and Co, 2002).

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Mongol Empire during the tenth to twelfth centuries, looking for evolutionary versus revolutionary features of the Mongol imperial enterprise. Then, the Mongol impact on Eurasia will be reassessed from three angles: the Mongol contribution to Eurasian integration, their impact on the Eurasian geo-political balance, and the future impact of their statecraft on the different regions under their realm.

The Mongols and the Inner Asian Tradition: Evolution versus Revolution

The Mongols did not arise from nothing, nor did they lack a cultural legacy of their own. In terms of political culture, religion, and military organization they continued a long tradition of steppe empires, while in terms of their relations with the sedentary civilizations they were influenced by the legacy of inter-regional nomadic states that arose in Manchuria and Central Asia in the tenth to twelfth centuries. Combining these two traditions, the unprecedented success of the Mongols resulted in a situation which, despite many continuities, was more revolutionary than evolutionary.

In terms of political-religious ideology, the Mongols followed the precedents established by earlier steppe empires that originated in Mongolia, notably the Xiongnu (third century BCE to fourth century CE), the Turks (sixth to eighth centuries CE), and their successors, the Uighurs (744-840), among which the Turkic Empire was by far the most influential. Those empires developed an ideology that legitimized the appearance and endurance of a super-tribal unit, and employed a military organization as an important structural element in the consolidation of such units.

The primary source of super-tribal unity in the steppe world was the belief in Tengri (Heaven), the supreme sky god of the steppe, who was able to confer the right to rule on earth to a single clan.[4] The heavenly charisma resided in the royal clan, individual members of which could be elevated to the Khaqanate, the supreme office of the ruler, or toppled; but non-members could not aspire to the throne. The Khaqan was the political and military leader of the empire, whose possession of

[4] Whether this notion originated in the Chinese concept of the Mandate of Heaven, in a similar Iranian concept or in an Indo-Aryan concept brought first to the steppe and then into China is unimportant. For a recent discussion see Sanping Chen, "Son of Heaven and Son of God: Interactions among Ancient Asiatic Cultures regarding Sacral Kingship and Theophoric Names," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 3rd series, 12 (2002), 289-325.

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the Tengri mandate was confirmed by success in battle on the one hand, and by the shamanic apparatus on the other. As Tengri did not bestow a mandate on every generation, such confirmation was important for securing the Khaqan's power. Yet the Khaqan also had certain shamanic functions (apparent, for example, in the coronation ceremony), which enabled him to depose the shamans if they threatened his authority.[5] The center of the world ruled by the Khaqan was the area around the Ötükän mountains near the Orkhon river in Central Mongolia (where the Turks left their famous inscriptions and where the Mongol capital, Qaraqorum, was built more than four hundred years later), a territory that was considered the sacred land of the nomadic world already under the Xiongnu.[6]

The Turk ideology was also used by the imperial successors of the Turks, the Uighurs in Mongolia and the Khazars on the European steppes. Both ruled over smaller-scale empires and in both the elite adopted a universal religion, Manichaeism or Judaism, alongside its Turkic tradition. Even though after the collapse of those empires (840 in Mongolia, c. 965 in Khazaria), and until the rise of the Mongols, no nomadic force aspired to unite the steppe or to use its universal tradition, it still served as "an ideology in reserve"[7] among the former participants of the Turkic world, ready to be used in case the super-tribal empire should come into being.

Another important device for the endurance of a steppe empire was structural, namely, the decimal military organization, present already under the Xiongnu. Nomads are described as "natural soldiers," since their pastoral way of life enabled them to acquire individual military skills (such as riding, shooting, endurance) from an early age, but the effectiveness of this skilled army varied greatly over the years.[8] Since every nomad was a potential soldier, military organization was actually an important means for social organization. Although until the time of

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[5] Peter B. Golden, "Imperial Ideology and the Sources of Political Unity amongst the Pre-Chinggisid Nomads of Western Eurasia," *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi*, 2 (1982), 37-77; Joseph Fletcher, "The Mongols: Ecological and Social perspectives," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 46 (1986), 30-1.

[6] Golden, "Imperial Ideology," 48, 54; Thomas T. Allsen, "Spiritual Geography and Political Legitimacy in the Eastern Steppe," in *Ideology and the Early State*, eds. H. Claessen and J. Oosten (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 116-35.

[7] Nicola Di Cosmo, "State Formation and Periodization in Inner Asian History," *Journal of World History*, 10 (1999), 20.

[8] Nicola Di Cosmo, "Introduction: Inner Asian Ways of Warfare," in *Warfare in Inner Asian History (500-1800)*, ed. N. Di Cosmo (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 3-12.

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Chinggis Khan the decimal units (of 10, 100, 1000 and 10,000) were roughly arranged according to tribal lines, their existence was an important device which enabled the Khaqan to bypass the tribal channels. The decimal organization was also a useful means of incorporating new nomads into the empire's army. The establishment of a royal guard, also present from the Xiongnu onwards, served the same functions and enabled the ruler to create a new elite, personally loyal to himself.[9]

While the Turkic Empire also created a political union across the vast area stretching from the borders of China to the Byzantine frontier, neither the Turks nor their predecessors or successors in Mongolia (until the rise of Chinggis Khan) ever tried to conquer the sedentary civilizations that bordered the steppe, implying that the universal rule of the Khaqan was limited to the nomadic world. Instead they consciously preferred to remain outside of the realm of their sedentary neighbors and use their mobility and superior military skills to secure their economic interests from the sedentary world through raids and alternating war and peace.[10] The resources needed for the sustenance of the empire were therefore acquired through tribute from the sedentary civilizations, and trade revenues, often derived through circulating a portion of the collected tributes throughout Eurasia. The Orkhon inscriptions attest that the Turks were fully aware of the connection between the need to remain outside of the realm of the sedentary world, with its seductive luxuries, and their ability to retain their distinct identity and the military superiority that enabled them to extract revenue from China.[11]

Yet the period that immediately preceded the Mongols, from the tenth century onward, saw the emergence of another kind of nomadic state. These new polities originated not in Mongolia, but either in Manchuria or Central Asia, i.e, in regions in which the coexistence of nomad and sedentary was far more common than on the Mongolian steppe. They rose to power in the absence of a strong force on the steppe after the fall of the Uighurs (840), and the decline of the bordering sedentary empires: i.e. the collapse of Tang China (906), the decline of the Abbasid Caliphate from the middle of the ninth century

[9] Fletcher, "The Mongols," 29-30; Di Cosmo, "Periodization," 17.

[10] Thomas J. Barfield, *The Perilous Frontier: Nomadic Empires and China* (Oxford:Blackwell, 1989), 49-51ff.

[11] T. Tekin, *A Grammar of Orkhon Turkic* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1968), 261-7.

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and the Samanids from the mid-tenth century. Unlike their Mongolian predecessors, these states did conquer parts of the sedentary civilizations that bordered the steppe, thereby creating empires in which a nomadic (or semi-nomadic) minority, backed by a strong military machine, ruled a multi-ethnic nomad and sedentary population. This required the acquisition of knowledge and administrative skills to manage the government of the sedentary areas as well as new forms of legitimization.[12] In establishing these states, the rulers became closely associated with the sedentary traditions of the peoples that they ruled; Chinese on the eastern steppe and Muslim on the western steppe (and, in the case of Hungary, even Christian). The sedentary influences played an important role in the shape of the royal institutions of these states and their administration, which included direct taxation of their sedentary population alongside tribute from China (on the eastern steppe) and a variety of indirect means of revenue collection (on the western steppe).[13] Yet those external influences did not supplant the steppe past, which remained an important part of the elite identity and government. Even when some of these rulers became sedentarized, the nomads and former nomads continued to share many common features. They shared social values, such as the central role of warfare in everyday life, the high position of women and merchants; certain aspects of political culture, such as alliances through marriage, hunting as royal sport, the policy of holding hostages, and certain aspects of military organization (although the states certainly diversified their military organization and tactics under

[12] Barfield, *The Perilous Frontier*, 164ff.; Di Cosmo, "Periodization," 32.

[13] Golden, "Ideology," 73-4; Di Cosmo, "Periodization," 32-3; Morgan, *Medieval Persia*, 34-40. While Hungary can be regarded as one of those mixed states that retained several Khazar influences, its limited connection with nomads after the collapse of the Khazars and the Christian ideology it adopted led to its rapid acculturation in the East-European world at the expense of its steppe roots, although it remained a frontier society. See P. B. Golden, "The Peoples of the Russian Forest Belt," in *The Cambridge History of Early Inner Asia*, ed. D. Sinor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 242-8; N. Berend, *At the Gate of Christendom: Jews, Muslims and 'Pagans' in Medieval Hungary c. 1000-1300* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001). In general, the European case is somewhat different than that of China or the Islamic World, mainly because after the period of the Huns (fourth-fifth centuries) and the Avars (sixth-ninth centuries) and certainly after the collapse of the Khazars in the tenth century, Europe was spared what China, Central Asia and the Middle East experienced time and again, namely invasion and domination by nomads. After the collapse of the Khazars, a modus vivendi between equals was arrived at between the nomads and "Russia," the part of Europe most closely connected to the steppe. For Europe, therefore, the Mongol invasion came without any preparatory stage. (M. Gammer, "Russia and the Nomads- An Overview," in *Mongols, Turks and Others: Eurasian Nomads and the Outside World*, eds. R. Amitai and M. Biran, forthcoming in Brill.)

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the influence of their sedentary territories).[14] On the western steppes such states were established by splinter groups of the Turks, such as the Qarakhanids (c. 950-1213), Saljuqs (c. 1044-1194), and Khwarazm Shahs (c. 1127-1220) while in the east, and of more immediate relevance for the Mongols, the founders were Manchurian peoples: the Khitans, formerly part of the Turkic world who came under a significant Uighur influence, who established the Liao dynasty (907-1125) and later the Qara Khitai (Western Liao) dynasty in Central Asia (1124-1218); and the Khitans' former vassals, the Jurchens, who founded the Jin dynasty (1115-1234).[15]

In their pre-imperial history, the Mongols were closely associated with the Manchurian dynasties. They entered Mongolia after the Khitans conquered it in the early tenth century, driving most of its original Turkic population westwards.[16] Liao garrisons and the cities they established in Mongolia earned the Khitans great prestige among the Mongols. They also served as channels for transferring Chinese and Khitan institutions; some of the latter, such as the postal system (*yam*) or the *ordo* (camp of the ruler or a prince), were later adopted by the Chinggisids.[17] The Jurchens, who deposed the Khitans in 1125, did not rule Mongolia, but played an active role in its tribal politics. Chinggis Khan's forefathers had tribute relations with the Jin, and he himself probably spent several years in Jin captivity, thus becoming familiar with its institutions.[18] The pre-imperial Mongols also had less frequent connections

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[14] Michal Biran, *The Empire of the Qara Khitai in Eurasian History: Between China and the Islamic World*, forthcoming in Cambridge University Press, Ch. 5.

[15] For the Qarakhanids see, e.g., P. B. Golden, "The Karakhanids and Early Islam," in *The Cambridge History of Early Inner Asia*, 343-70; For the Saljuqs and Khwarazm Shahs see, e.g., Morgan, Medieval Persia, 25-50; for the Liao, perhaps the most interesting example of using indigenous and sedentary components while retaining a distinct identity through the dual administration (one for the nomadic sector and one for the sedentary subjects) it developed, see, e.g., Wittfogel and Feng, *History of Chinese Society*: Liao 907-1125 (Philadelphia:The American Philosophical Society, 1949) and Zhongguo Lishi Bowuguan et al., *Qidan zhao wangchao: Nei Menggu Liaodai wenwu jinghua [The Liao Dynasty: Liao relics from Inner Mongolia[sic]]* (Beijing: Zhongguo cangxue chubanshe, 2002); D. Twitchett and K. P. Tietze, "The Liao," in *The Cambridge History of China, vol. 6: Alien states and Border Regimes 907-1368*, eds D. Twitchett and H. Franke (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 43-153; for the Jin, see, e.g., H. Franke, "The Chin Dynasty," in *The Cambridge History of China* vol. 6, 215-320. For the Western Liao see Biran, *Qara Khitai.*

[16] Owen Lattimore, "The Geography of Chingis Khan," *Geographical Journal*, 129 (1963), 1-7.

[17] Ibid.; David O. Morgan, *The Mongols* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), 44-51.

[18] Thomas T. Allsen, "The Rise of the Mongol Empire and Mongolian Rule in North China," in *The Cambridge History of China* vol. 6, 329-33.

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with the Central Asian states, mainly through Muslim merchants. Of these states the Qara Khitai Empire was especially significant. Using Chinese trappings to rule a mostly Muslim population, the Qara Khitai narrowed the gap between the ways of ruling in Central Asia and China, thereby facilitating the Mongol's ability to borrow traditions and personnel from both directions.[19]

The Mongols owed much to their direct predecessors on the margins of the steppe, especially their ability to combine nomad and sedentary territories and populations under effective rule. These states provided the Mongols with ready-made pools of officials, experienced in mediating foreign rule, either from the indigenous bureaucrats and scribal classes of those states, or, more commonly, from ex- (or post)-nomads who were already active (mainly as bureaucrats, governors or merchants) under the Mongols' predecessors.[20] The important roles of the ex-nomads Uighurs, Khitans and, to a lesser extent, the Khwarazmians and Khurasanians in the ranks of the early Mongol Empire certainly support this notion.[21] Yet it would be misleading to describe the Mongols simply as the most successful of these states.[22] First, because they also continued the tradition of the Mongolian steppe empires and, more importantly, because the phenomenal success of the Mongols resulted not only in quantitative change (i.e. a vaster empire) but also qualitative change, thereby making the Mongol period the watershed of Inner Asian history.

Chinggis Khan died in 1227, ruling over the greatest territory any one man had ever conquered, from north China to the Caspian Sea.

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[19] Biran, *Qara Khitai*, Conclusion.

[20] Thomas T. Allsen, "Technologies of Governance in the Mongolian Empire: A Geographical Survey," paper given in the MIASU Symposium on Inner Asian Statecrafts and Technologies of Governance, Cambridge UK, March 18-19, 2004. As Allsen claims, the absence of such personnel in Russia was at least partially responsible for the different—and indirect—government established by the Golden Horde.

[21] For Uighurs see Thomas T. Allsen, "The Yuan Dynasty and the Uighurs in Turfan in the 13th Century," in *China Among Equals*, ed. Morris Rossabi (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 243-80; For Khitans, see Michal Biran, "Mongols, Turks and Chinese: The Khitans under Mongol Rule," paper presented at the International conference for Mongol-Yuan Studies, Nanjing, China, August 2002; For Khwārazm see Thomas T. Allsen, "Maîmūd Yalawach," in *In the Service of the Khan*, ed. I. de Rachewiltz et al. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1993), 121-31; for the importance of Khurasani officials to the Ilkhanate see Jean Aubin, *Emirs Mongols and visirs persans dans les ramous de l'acculturation* (Paris: Association pour l'advancement des etudes Iraniennes, 1995).

[22] Cf. Jerry Benteley, *Old World Encounters* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 115.

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His heirs continued to expand, creating an empire that at its height (1259) streched from Korea to Hungary, from Yunnan (in south China) to Iraq. Unlike their predecessors, the Mongols conquered not only the margins of the sedentary civilizations but their centers as well, and while doing so they broke down the boundaries between the eastern steppe, a Chinese sphere of influence, and the western steppes, influenced by Islam. Moreover, the conquest was conducted in a way that paved the way for the creation of a new reality.

One major factor for both the Mongol success and the revolution it created was the unprecedented amount of destruction that accompanied the Mongol conquests, which resulted (among other things) in the annihilation, transfer and downgrading of sizable segments of the established Eurasian elites.[23] A second factor was the new organization of the Mongol army: Chinggis Khan retained the classical decimal organization but abolished its linkage to the tribal system: the new Mongol units often comprised people from different tribes and were led primarily by Chinggis Khan's *nökers* (personal allies), who became the new elite of the empire. The soldiers' loyalty was thereby transferred from their tribe to their commander and beyond him to the Chinggisid family. The improved coordination of these newly created units certainly contributed to the success of their conquests.[24] Another significant reason for the Mongol success was their willingness to learn from their subjects and their skill in doing so. They borrowed and adapted institutions from different edges of their empire (again mainly from either the Muslim world or China), both for the conquest and for the consolidation of their empire. This brought new technologies and personnel to the edges of the empire, encouraged the Mongol tendency of ruling through foreigners, and created an imperial culture (also maintained in the separate khanates established after 1260) that comprised not only the Mongols social and cultural norms and the indigenous traditions of the conquered but also foreign traditions imported by the Mongols (more about this below).[25]

Thus, the background to the unprecedented success of the Mongols

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[23] For different explanations to Mongol destruction see Fletcher, "The Mongols," 39-43, who sees the destruction mainly as a form of psychological warfare, and John Masson Smith Jr. "Demographic Considerations in Mongol Siege Warfare," *Archivum Ottomanicum*, 13 (1993-94), 329-34, who stresses the demographic and tactical concerns behind it.

[24] Morgan, *The Mongols*, 89-90. The military success of the Mongols owes much to this reorganization and to the efficient coordination between the units.

[25] Thomas T. Allsen, *Culture and Conquest of Mongol Eurasia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 203.

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contributed to its revolutionary character. Moreover, this unprecedented success has its own implications, which in turn enhanced the new Eurasia created under the Mongols.

The phenomenal achievements of Chinggis Khan turned the Chinggisids into the new royal clan of the steppe. The Chinggisid principle, according to which only descendants of the Great Khan were eligible to bear the titles khan or khaqan, was sustained in Inner Asia for centuries, long after the dissolution of the Mongol empire.[26]

Moreover, already by the time of Chinggis Khan, the Mongols had revived the concept of universal nomadic rule sanctioned by Heaven. Unlike their predecessors, however, they broadened the concept, to include their right to rule over the whole world, in both its nomadic and sedentary realms. The center of the empire, however, remained in the steppe (at least till 1260), as suggested by the establishment of the Mongol capital, Qaraqorum, in the sacred place of the former nomadic empires in the reign of Ögödei, Chinggis Khan's successor (1229-1241).[27] Among the renowned expressions of this newly conceived ideology were the ultimatums the Mongol issued to different rulers of the world. Indeed, unlike their predecessors, the Mongols were unwilling to accept the coexistence of rival claimants to universal rule: they did not leave the Caliph intact, as the Saljuqs had done, nor were they prepared to accept the legitimacy of another Son of Heaven, as the Khitans and Jurchen had done vis-à-vis the Song emperor. The Pope, another significant claimant to universal authority, survived the Mongol onslaught, but the annihilation of the Song in China in 1276 and, more importantly, the Abbasid Caliphate in 1258, paved the way for major changes in these two realms.[28]

In terms of their relations with their sedentary subjects, after they had realized that it would be more profitable to tax their subjects than

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[26] See below.

[27] Golden, "Imperial Ideology," 48; Allsen, "Spiritual Geography," 116-35.

[28] For the Mongol ideology of world dominion see e.g. R. Amitai-Preiss, "Mongol Imperial Ideology and the Ilkhanid War against the Mamluks," in *The Mongol Empire and its Legacy* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), eds. D. O. Morgan and R. Amitai-Preiss, 59-72, and the references on p. 62. This article shows that the ideology of world conquest was relevant even after the dissolution of the empire into four khanates in 1260 and into the fourteenth century; see also P. Jackson, "World-Conquest and Local Accomodation: Threat and Blandishment in Mongol Diplomacy," paper given in the MIASU symposium on Inner Asian Statecraft and Technologies of Governance, Cambridge UK, March 18-19, 2004.

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to annihilate them, the Mongols used direct taxation as the principal means of collecting revenues from their subjects, rather than the tribute and most of the other indirect solutions employed by their predecessors.[29]

The vast empire and the eclectic state culture, combined with the fact that the Mongols ruled over the two most economically productive areas in Eurasia (China and the eastern Islamic world),[30] certainly contributed to their ability to integrate the Eurasian world more than their steppe predecessors.

Integration on a Eurasian Scale

The Mongol period was a significant step towards closer integration of the old world, both inside and outside the empire's realm. Certainly the vast dimensions of the empire contributed to that, but the role of the Mongols was not limited to the passive medium through which the sophisticated sedentary subjects learnt from one another, as suggested by the (problematic) term *Pax Mongolica*.[31] Instead they actively promoted inter-cultural exchange.

The Mongols' active role originally derived from the fact that the formation of the empire, its continued expansion, and the establishment of its administration required a huge mobilization of people throughout the empire, and this mobilization was the first step towards cross-cultural exchange and integration. The mobilization is to be explained primarily by demographic considerations. In Chinggis Khan's times the total population of Mongolia was about 700,000. Therefore, human capital was of primary importance to the nomads, and the political struggles that accompanied the formation of the Mongol state concentrated more on the control of people and herds than on territorial gains. The demographic balance also meant that in order to continue expanding, the Mongols had to make use of the already conquered subjects. The first and perhaps most wide-ranging means for Mongol mobilization was therefore the army. Already Chinggis Khan appropriated defeated nomads and subjugated tribes, organized in new decimal units among Mongol

[29] Di Cosmo, "Periodization," 34.

[30] Janet Abu-Lughod, *Before European Hegemony* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 352ff.

[31] This passive view is held, for example, by Bentley, despite his stress on the role of nomadic empires in the 1000-1500 period. See Jerry Bently, "Cross-Cultural Interaction and Periodization in World History," *American Historical Review*, (1996), 766-7.

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princes and commanders, and sent them to fight across Eurasia, a process continued in the even larger scale campaigns of his heirs.[32]

The mobilization was not limited to the military sphere. In fact as soon as the Mongols found themselves rulers of an empire with a significant sedentary sector, they realized that they were lacking not only numbers but also specialists. Nomadic culture creates generalists, as every nomad is versed in variety of skills that allow him to survive in the steppe; but these skills are not sufficient for ruling a world empire. The Mongols therefore looked for specialists "skillful in the laws and custom of cities,"[33] and redistributed them across Eurasia. This process involved both groups, like the 100,000 artisans taken in 1221 from Transoxiana to Mongolia and China, or the northern Chinese farmers sent to Merv and later transferred to Adharbaijan; and (many) individuals, specializing in various fields (such as military technology, administration, religion, trade, astronomy, medicine, cooking, wrestling, mechanical engineering). The collection of specialists was systematized already in the late 1230s by means of census, in which people were classified according to their skills (military, artisans, etc).[34]

Another factor that encouraged mobilization was the Mongol policy of ruling through strangers, a practice originating from the Mongol's numerical inferiority and their fear of potential local resistance. Chinggis Khan already sent the Khwarazmian Maḥmūd Yalawach to rule in North China and the Khitan brothers, Yelü Ahai and Yelü Tuhua, to rule in Bukhara. This policy was further systematized in Yuan China, where the Mongols created a special category of *semuren* (people of various kinds), second only to the Mongols and more privileged than the Chinese, for their foreign subjects.[35] The Mongols preferred foreigners who originated in the inter-regional nomadic empires, people who were not only skilled in the laws of the cities but also had connections to the steppe (e.g. Khitans, Uighurs, Khwarazmians), though other talented people (the famous example is Marco Polo) were also welcome. In order

[32] Allsen, "Ever Closer Encounters," 4; the best description of Mongol mobilization at its height, under Möngke Qa'an (1251-59) is to be found in Allsen's *Mongol Imperialism: The Policies of the Great Qan Möngke in China, Russia and the Islamic Lands* (Berkely: University of California Press, 1989), esp. 189-216.

[33] F. W. Cleaves (trans.), *The Secret History of the Mongols* (Cambridge Mass: Harvard University Press, 1982), par. 263, p. 203.

[34] Allsen, "Ever Closer Encounters," 4-6, 9; Allsen, *Mongol Imperialism*, 116-43; Allsen, *Culture and Conquest*, 83-176.

[35] Allsen, "Ever Closer Encounters," 6, and see n. 21 above; for the *semuren* see, e.g., Frederick W. Mote, "Chinese Society under Mongol Rule, 1215-1368," in *The Cambridge History of China* vol. 6, 644-8.

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to secure the loyalty of this foreign strata, the Mongols aspired to give them "a taste of home," and therefore brought foreign (mostly Muslim or Central Asian) food, medicine and entertainment into Yuan China.[36]

As suggested by the examples above, the Chinggisids regarded human talent (from both inside and outside the empire) as a form of booty, to be shared out among the family like material goods. The different khanates competed for these specialists and exchanged them in order to get a better grip on the economic and cultural wealth of their sedentary lands and to enhance their kingly reputation.[37]

These Mongol attitudes created innumerable opportunities for cross-cultural contacts. Most of what was transmitted was not the Mongol's ethnic culture but elements of the cultures of their sedentary subjects, yet the Mongols initiated most of these exchanges; most of the carriers of culture were agents of the empire, while the Mongols served as the filter, directing which particular traits would be diffused across Eurasia. In short, the flow of people, ideas and goods across Asia was determined to a large extent by what the Mongols liked, needed and were interested in.[38] These interests also included mobilizing the spiritual forces in their realm, and therefore scholars and clergy also traveled between the Mongol courts. The Mongols showed great interest in fields that were compatible with their own norms, mostly with their shamanic beliefs, such as astronomy, divination, medicine (=healing) or geomancy. They therefore promoted scientific exchanges. In Allsen's eloquent argument, this meant that Muslim astronomers came to China not because they or their Chinese counterparts wanted scientific exchange, but because the Mongols wanted second opinions on the reading of portents.[39]

Trade was, obviously, another means of promoting integration, and the Mongols played an active role in promoting it too. The process of state formation among the nomads itself stimulated trade by increasing the demand for precious metals, gems, and especially fine cloth, all necessary to assert the new empire's authority.[40] Chinggis Khan was certainly aware of the benefits of commerce (which initiated the Khwārazm campaign), and Muslim merchants were among his earliest supporters,

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[36] Allsen, *Culture and Conquest*, 195-6.
[37] Allsen, *Culture and Conquest*, 210.
[38] Allsen, *Culture and Conquest*, 189-211.
[39] Allsen, *Culture and Conquest*, 211.
[40] See in general Thomas T. Allsen, *Commodity and Exchange in the Mongol Empire: A Cultural History of Islamic Textiles* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

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even before he succeeded in uniting the Mongol tribes. Moreover, after the early conquests, the Mongol elite, the principal benefactor of the conquests' booty, became extremely wealthy. It recycled this wealth by investing with their commercial agents (*ortogh*)—mostly Muslims and Uighurs—in ways that were often similar to western *commenda* and Muslim *qirāḍ*. The profits were spent on the lavish consumption characteristic of the "nouveau riche." The establishment of Qaraqorum also promoted trade, as the resources of Mongolia could hardly support such a big city (in Mongolian terms) or its court. The Mongols were prepared to pay generously to remain on the steppe while enjoying the best of the agricultural world, and there were plenty of traders who seized the opportunity, benefiting from the safe roads and access to the postal stations.[41] Even after the empire dissolved into the four khanates, Mongol governments continued to promote both local and international trade, which provided taxes, markets, profits and prestige. The khanates competed for commerce specialists, provided infrastructure for transcontinental travel, sometimes by building new cities, and were actively involved in the manipulation of bullion flow.[42] Di Cosmo, who recently reviewed Mongol relations with the Italian merchants on the Black Sea shores, concluded that even in this arena of European expansion, the Mongol khanate of Qipchaq (the Golden Horde) played a leading role in determining the development of the trade. Moreover, Italian trade with Central Asia and China, places where the Italian city states refused to interfere diplomatically to secure adequate agreements for their traders, was made possible only by Mongols creating the infrastructure for such contacts, and indeed came to an end with the collapse of the Yuan dynasty in 1368.[43]

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[41] Thomas T. Allsen, "Mongolian Princes and their Merchant Partners 1200-1260," *Asia Major*, n.s., 2 (1989), 83-126.

[42] Allsen, "Ever Closer Encounters," 20-23; A. Peter Martinez, "Regional Mint Output and the Dynamics of Bullion Flows through the Il-Khanate," *Journal of Turkish Studies*, 8 (1984), 147-73; A. Peter Martinez, "Ducats and dinars (part I): currency manipulations, paper money, arbitrage, the bullion trade, and monetary-commercial policy in the Il-Xanate, 654-694 H. / 1256-1295 A.D.", *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi*, 10 (1999), 118-206; Michal Biran, *Qaidu and the Rise of the Independent Mongol State in Central Asia* (Richmond Surrey: Curzon, 1997), 104-5; M. G. Kramarovsky, "The Culture of the Golden Horde and the Problem of the "Mongol Legacy," in *Rulers from the Steppe*, eds. G. Seaman and D. Marks (Los Angeles: Ethnographic Press, Center for Visual Anthropology, University of Southern California, 1991), 255-73; Elizabeth Endicott-West, "Merchant Associations in Yuan China: the Ortogh," *Asia Major*, n.s., 2 (1989), 127-53.

[43] Nicola Di Cosmo, "Mongols and Merchants on the Black Sea Frontier (13th and 14th Centuries): Convergences and Conflicts," forthcoming in *Mongols, Turks and Others.*

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The wide-ranging mobilization and expanding trade led to frequent and continuous moves of people, goods, ideas, plants, and viruses throughout Eurasia. This in turn not only encouraged integration but also created means that facilitated further contacts, such as maps, which gave a visual dimension to the broadening horizons of the Eurasian people, multi-lingual dictionaries, and of course travel literature.[44] The effects of the integration are apparent, for example, in the diffusion of information and technologies (e.g., gunpowder and distilling alcohol);[45] in the adoption of "Tatar dress" in fourteenth century England, in Yuan and Ming China, in Ilkhanid and post-Ilkhanid Iran, in Chaghadaid and Timurid Central Asia and in Mamluk Egypt.[46] The famous pasta was imported from the Middle East by both China and Italy,[47] and the Bubonic plague travelled all the way from south China to Europe and the Middle East.[48]

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[44] For cartography see Allsen, *Culture and Conquest*, 103-14; for travel literature see, e.g., John Larner, *Marco Polo and the Discovery of the World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999). The development of lexicography is an especially good example of both the Mongol's role in scientific exchange and the radiance of cross-cultural effects to territories outside the empire. The Mongols used diverse languages and scripts in the management of their empire, and their multilingual empire was a major catalyst in the growth of language studies throughout Eurasia. They generously rewarded those with linguistic skills, i.e., mastery of both the Mongolian language, in its spoken, written or printed forms, and mastery of foreign languages often conferred status and power. Moreover, Mongolian words and usages penetrated into Chinese, Russian and Persian languages. The Mongols organized schools for language training, encouraged translation and sponsored or inspired the compilation of multi-lingual vocabularies. Multi-lingual lists of terms (i.e., dictionaries) appear in the thirteenth-fourteenth centuries not only in Iran and China but also in Armenia, Korea, North India, Egypt, Yemen and the Crimea. The two most famous compilations are the *Rasulid Hexaglot*, with entries in Mongolian, Turkic, Arabic, Persian, Tibetan and Greek, and the *Codex Cumanicus* with its Italo-Latin-Cuman-Persian vocabulary. The establishment of chairs of oriental languages in major European universities in the early fourteenth century is also ascribed to the Mongol's influence, as this kind of knowledge was considered essential for converting the Tatars. See Thomas T. Allsen, "The Rasulid Hexaglot in its Eurasian Cultural Context," in *The King's Dictionary*, ed. and tr. P. B. Golden (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 25-49.

[45] Allsen, "Ever Closer Encounters," 11-13.

[46] J. R. S. Phillips, "The Outer World of the European Middle Ages," in *Implicit Understandings: Observing, Reporting and Reflecting on the Encounters between European and Other People in the Early Modern Era*, ed. S. B. Schwartz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 54; Henry Serruys, "Remains of Mongol Customs in China during the Early Ming Period," *Monumenta Serica*, 16 (1957), 148-65; Bernard Lewis, "The Mongols, the Turks and Mulsim Polity", in id., *Islam in History* (2nd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 198.

[47] Paul D. Buell, "Mongol Empire and Turkicization: The Evidence of Food and Foodways," in *The Mongol Empire and its Legacy*, 200-23.

[48] William H. McNeill, *Plagues and People* (New York: Anchor Books, 1977), 161-207.

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Another significant mode of integration was in the field of religion. The Mongols provided a huge reservoir of potential converts for the different world religions, and missionaries were among those who roamed the open routes of the Mongol Empire. For reasons that cannot be discussed here (but had a lot to do with the Muslim ability to make their religion compatible with the Mongol's shamanic practices), Islam was the great winner in the struggle for converts.[49] By the mid-fourteenth century, after the Islamization of the Ilkhanate, the Golden Horde and the Chaghadaid Khanate, this resulted in the appearance of a new Turco-Mongolian elite in the region that lay between the Tian shan and the Volga as well as across most of the Middle East. This elite was Muslim, spoke Turkish and honored the traditions of the Mongol Empire.[50] While China and Europe remained outside of this phenomenon, it is certainly a good example of integration on a rather significant scale.

The Mongols and the Eurasian Geo-Political Balance

Despite the tendency of Russian and Muslim thinkers (as well as some Chinese nationalists in the early twentieth century) to ascribe everything that went wrong with their civilizations to the Mongols' influence,[51] or Archibald Lewis's assertion that the rise of Europe was made possible because it was spared the Mongol conquest,[52] the Mongols did not cause drastic changes in the geopolitical balance of Eurasia. True, the initial invasions were traumatic enough, but the destruction was limited, both in extent and duration. As soon as the Mongols understood that they could get more out of their territories by taxation than by ravaging them, which was apparent already in Möngke's reign (1251-59), they

[49] There is a growing literature on Mongol Islamization, the most comprehensive work being that of Devin DeWeese, *Islamization and Native Religion in the Golden Horde* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993); see also Peter Jackson, "The Mongols and the Faith of their Conquered," forthcoming in *Mongols, Turks and Others*; on Christian conversion attempts see, e.g., J. R. S. Phillips, *The Medieval Expansion of Europe* (2nd edn; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 83-102.

[50] Beatrice F. Manz, "Historical Introduction," in *Central Asia in Historical Perspective*, ed. B. F. Manz (Boulder, Colo: Westview Press, 1994), 6.

[51] Charles Halperin, "Russia in the Mongol Empire in Comparative Perspective," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 43 (1983), 239; B. Lewis, "The Mongols, the Turks and Muslim Polity," 189-90.

[52] Archibald Lewis, *Nomads and Crusades 1000-1368* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), 166-93.

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consciously tried to limit the damage.[53] This does not mean that there were no exceptions; the bloody conquest of Baghdad in 1258 is by far the most famous example. Furthermore, regions that became buffer zones between the Mongols and their enemies (e.g. Iraq) or between the different Khanates (Khurasan, Uighuria) certainly suffered multiple raids throughout the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. Yet alongside both calculated and accidental devastation, there were positive attempts by the Khans to restore the productivity of their lands, attempts that were facilitated by the multiple possibilities of regional and international trade.[54] The important productive regions, China and the Middle East, thus retained their status, both during and after the Mongol conquests.[55]

Mongol rule was, however, geo-politically important in two ways. First, it led to shifting the political center of most of the empire's regions, sometimes with enduring results. Second, the administrative divisions that after 1260 became four separate Mongol khanates were influential in shaping later political boundaries and ethnic identities.

Mongol rulers relocated the capitals of each of the established khanates, generally in a north-easterly direction. This may originally have reflected the location of Qaraqorum, the Mongol capital on the Orkhon river, or the nomads' need to reside closer to the steppe. In China the capital shifted from Kaifeng and Hangzhou to Beijing;[56] in the eastern Islamic world it moved from Baghdad to Tabriz in Adharbaijan, in Russia from Kiev to, first Saray (south-east of Kiev), and then Moscow (north-east again), and in Central Asia (the least defined case) from Balasaghun (modern north Kyrgyzstan) to the region of Almaliq, (in north Xinjiang). The central positions of Beijing and Moscow remain unchallenged; in Iran the area of Adharbaijan retained its importance until at least the end of the sixteenth century,[57] while in Central Asia,

[53] B. Lewis, "The Mongols, the Turks and Muslim Polity," 192; Allsen, *Mongol Imperialism*, 82; Morris Rossabi, *Khubilai Khan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 77ff.

[54] Biran, Qaidu, 97-106; George Lane, *Early Mongol Rule in Thirteenth Century Iran: A Persian Renaissance* (London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 15-27; Donald Ostrowski, *Muscovy and the Mongols* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 108-31.

[55] Abu Loghud, *Before European Hegemony*, 352ff.; Andre G. Frank, *ReOrient: Global Economy in the Asian Age* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 75-84; 108-16.

[56] Beijing was one of the capitals of the Liao and Jin dynasties before the Mongols, but only under the Yuan it was completely rebuilt to become the capital of the whole of China.

[57] Bert Fregner, "Iran under Ilkhanid Rule in a World History Perspective," in *L'Iran*

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Samarqand and to a lesser extent Kashgar replaced Almaliq in the fourteenth century.

The Mongol conquests and the four khanates they later created also played important roles in defining later political and ethnic entities. In China the Mongol legacy was unification, after 350 years of separation between north and south. The extended boundaries of Mongol and post-Mongol China included Yunnan in the south-west, Gansu in the north-west and, despite Ming attempts to avoid it, significant parts of Inner Asia, namely, Tibet, Xinjiang, Manchuria and (Inner) Mongolia.[58] Ethnically, on the one hand the first alien conquest of the entire country might have given a boost to a development of proto-ethnic or patriotic Chinese identity (opposed to the universalistic idea of *all-under-heaven*) or at least to a bitter anti-foreignism.[59] On the other hand, it also resulted in assimilation of large numbers of steppe peoples (Uighurs, Khitans, Jurchens, Tanguts and even Mongols) into Chinese society, especially from the fourteenth century onward. Today the People's Republic of China strongly emphasizes the multi-ethnic character of Yuan society as one of its major contributions to the "national characteristics of the contemporary Chinese people."[60]

The Mongols also contributed to Iran's emergence as a distinct political and ethnic entity within the Muslim world. Like the Sasanid Empire, the orientation of the Ilkhanate, the Mongol state based in Iran, was more towards China and Europe than the Muslim Middle East. Moreover, Mongol Iran had much the same borders as the Sasanid Empire (and the modern state). The use of the name Iran to denominate a political entity, a Sasanian concept not used during early Muslim rule in Iran, was revived by the Mongols; the Persian language finally replaced Arabic

face a la domination mongole, ed. D. Aigle (Tehran: Institut Français de Recherche en Iran, 1997), 128.

[58] H. Okada, "China as a Successor State to the Mongol Empire," in *The Mongol Empire and its Legacy*, 260-72; John W. Dardess, "Did the Mongols Matter? Territory, Power and the Intelligentsia in China from the Northern Song to the Early Ming," in *The Song-Yuan-Ming Transition*, eds. P. J. Smith and R. von Glahn (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 111-34. Inner Mongolia remains part of the PRC, while Outer Mongolia, a dependent of China in Qing times, became the independent Republic of Mongolia in 1921.

[59] Allsen, "Ever Closer Encounters," 16.

[60] Qiu Shushen, "Lun Yuan dai Zhongguo shaoshu minzu xin tanju ji qi shehui yingxiang," (On the New Pattern of National Minorities and its Impact on the Yuan Society [sic]), in *Abstracts of papers given in the international conference on Mongol-Yuan Studies* (Nanjing, August 2002), p. 143.

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as the preferred vehicle for writing history and soon became the written lingua-franca of the Turco-Mongolic world; and the ethnic composition of the population became much as it has since remained, i.e. including many Turkic and Turco-Mongolian nomads.[61]

As for the rest of the Middle East, the Mongols' annihilation of the Abbasid Caliphate in Baghdad, reduced Iraq, once the center of the Islamic world, to a neglected frontier province, as it has remained almost ever since. Egypt, the only Muslim state to successfully defy the Mongols, improved its position as another center of the Muslim world; the establishment and consolidation of its Mamluk regime owes much to its successful struggle against the Ilkhanate.[62] Even the emirate of Othman, later to become the Ottoman Empire, rose within the Ilkhanid sphere of influence.[63] In general the Mongol period completed the process of Turco-Mongol (as opposed to Arab or Persian) dominance of the ruling elites of the Middle East, a process that had begun in the tenth century.[64]

In Russia, the Mongols contributed significantly to the rise of Moscow, though the exact nature of this contribution is still debated.[65] Moreover, Moscow used its claim as the successor to the Horde to justify its later expansion, and the emergence of Russia as a Eurasian power (as opposed to the few European city states in Kievan Rus times) can be traced to the legacy of the Horde.[66] From the sixteenth century, however, Russia also used the Mongols (or Tatars) as its significant other, developing the concept of the Tatar Yoke and defining Russian identity as its total opposite.[67]

In Central Asia the situation was more complex. While there is no modern continuation of the Chaghadaid khanate, in the late fourteenth

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[61] Fregner, "Iran under Ilkhanid Rule," 120-130; cf. Elton L. Daniel, *The History of Iran* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 75-81.

[62] B. Lewis, 206.

[63] R. P. Lindner, "How Mongol were the early Ottomans?" in *The Mongol Empire and its Legacy*, 282-9.

[64] B. Lewis, "The Mongols, the Turks and the Muslim Polity," 203.

[65] Ostrowski, Muscovy, 1-27; Charles Halperin, *Russia and the Golden Horde* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press,1985), 53-60 and passim; Janet Martin, *Medieval Russia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 382-5.

[66] J. Pelenski, "Moscovite Imperial Claims to the Kazan Khanate," *Slavic Review*, 26 (1967), 559-76; idem, *Russia and Kazan: Conquest and Imperial Ideology* (The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1974), 65-173. For an extreme "Eurasianist" view see Nicolai S. Trubetzkoy, "The Legacy of Genghis Khan: A Perspective on Russian History not from the West but from the East (1925)," in his collected volume *The Legacy of Genghis Khan*, ed. A. Lieberman (Ann Arbor: Michigan Slavic Publications, 1991), 161-232.

[67] Ostrowski, Muscovy, 244-8.

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century it gave rise to the empire of Tamerlane and his short-lived attempt (1370-1405) to revive the Mongol Empire. This in turn led to the Timurid cultural renaissance in Iran and Central Asia (1405-1501), and to the establishment of the Moghul dynasty (1526-1858), which brought Chinggisid and Timurid traditions into India.[68] In terms of ethnic change, however, the Mongol period was the most influential in this region. Mongol policies, especially military mobilization and the redistribution of the steppe peoples in their armies, led to the dispersion of many established peoples, who had long and celebrated pre-Mongol histories (such as the Uighurs, Khitans, Tanguts, Qipchaqs) and to the emergence of new collectivities, which formed the basis for many of the modern Central Asian peoples (e.g. Uzbeks and Qazaqs). From the fourteenth century onward, most of the pre-Mongol steppe peoples were either assimilated in the sedentary civilizations surrounding them, mainly in China or Iran, or reduced to clan or tribal units in the new collectivities established by the Mongols. After the disintegration of the empire these new collectivities had to refashion their identities. They often coalesced around the names of particular Mongol princes (e.g. Chaghadai, Özbeg, Nogai etc.) and eventually developed into the modern Central Asian peoples.[69]

As for Western Europe, its main benefit from the Mongol period was not geo-political or ethnic but intellectual. Indeed it avoided the initial demolition and (unlike India and Egypt), after 1260, was hardly bothered by Mongol raids or the threat of them; its own economic growth enabled it (principally the Italian city-states) to fully benefit from the new channels of trade and travel opened by the Mongols. Moreover, technologically inferior and more provincial than either China or the Muslim world, there was much to be gained from taking part in the

[68] Beatrice F. Manz, "Mongol History Rewritten and Relived," *Revue des mondes musulmans et de la méditerranée*, 89-90 (2000), 129-49; Beatrice F. Manz, "Tamerlane's Career and its Uses," *Journal of World History*, 13 (2002), 1-25. One of the main features of the Timurid renaissance was the emergence of Chaghatay (Eastern Turkic) as a written language. This is the only case in which the Mongols gave their name to a phenomenon of "high" culture.

[69] P. B. Golden, "'I will give the people unto thee,': The Chinggisid Conquests and their Aftermath in the Turkic World" *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* Series 3, 10 (2000), 21-41; Allsen, "Ever Closer Encounters", 16-18; Biran, "Mongols, Turks and Chinese," 1-3. Most of these people originated in the realm of the Golden Horde but especially after 1500 several of them (notably the Uzbeks) moved southward into the former Chaghadaid realm.

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Mongol "information circuit."[70] However, it took several centuries (and overcoming the Black Death) to translate the broadening geographical and intellectual horizons and technological diffusion into geo-political advantage.[71]

The Legacy of Mongol Statecraft

The Mongol legacy had different institutional impacts on the various civilizations that were affected by it. The most profound effects were in the regions where Mongol rule was longer-lasting, and where there was no strong indigenous tradition of a centralized state; namely Central Asia and Russia. A certain institutional legacy, however, can also be discerned in China and Iran, but the Mongol influence also reached beyond the limits of the empire, most notably in the Muslim world. It is also worthwhile differentiating between the practical borrowing of Mongol institutions on the one hand, and adopting the Mongol political ideology on the other.

The basic component of Mongol statecraft was the Chinggisid principle, i.e., the notion that only descendants of Chinggis Khan were eligible to bear the title khan, which denotes the highest political office. Although attempts to manipulate this principle began rather early (e.g., under Tamerlane), in Central Asia it remained in effect until the late eighteenth century.[72] Moreover, in Uzbek Central Asia even the position of the non-Chinggisid military groups was determined according to the position of their forebears in Chinggis Khan's army during the military campaigns of the thirteenth century.[73] The Chinggisid principle was relevant in other parts of Eurasia as well: e.g. the Moghuls in India, although generally stressing their Timurid genealogy, also used their Chinggisid origins as a legitimating factor.[74] Even in the Ottoman Empire, where Chinggisid origins played no part in the (non Chinggisid) rulers' identities, the Uzbeks and Crimean Tatars enjoyed special prestige due

[70] Samuel A. M. Adshead, *Central Asia in World History* (New York: Macmillan, 1993), 70-3.

[71] As Adshead put it: "If Europe came to dominate the world, it was possibly because Europe first perceived there was a world to dominate" (Adshead, *Central Asia*, 77). For the connection between the Mongol period and European expansion in the modern period see, e.g., Larner, *Marco Polo*, passim; Phillips, *The Medieval Expansion*, passim.

[72] Robert D. McChesney, *Central Asia: Foundations of Change* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 123-6.

[73] McChesney, *Central Asia*, 123-4.

[74] Richard C. Foltz, *Mughal India and Central Asia* (Oxford-Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1998), 12-51.

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to their Chinggisid genealogy.[75] The Chinggisid principle also had a significant impact on Muscovy. The Russians were aware of it and in the Kulikovo era (around 1380) used it to justify their actions against the Golden Horde. Even after the overthrow of the Golden Horde in 1480, the grand princes of Moscow presented themselves as the successors of the Chinggisids, adopting the title *tsar*, which, aside from its Byzantine connotations, was also the title used exclusively to denote the Chinggisid Qipchaq khans. As late as 1575-6 Ivan the Terrible abdicated in favor of the Chinggisid Symon Bekbulatovitc. Chinggisid descent remained important in Russian politics until the westernization of Peter the Great in the seventeenth century, yet as late as the nineteenth century, Chinggisids living in the Russian Empire demanded a noble status on the basis of their genealogy.[76] The Chinggisid tradition was also relevant in Qing China (1644-1911), where the Manchus, after marring Chinggisid princesses and obtaining the Chinggisid seal from his heirs, used their position as successors of the Chinggisids as one facet in their complex legitimation.[77]

In Central Asia the adherence to the Chinggisid legacy was also expressed in the continued importance of the *Yasa*, the collection of laws ascribed to Chinggis Khan. Even after the Islamization of the Mongols in the fourteenth century the *Yasa* continued to be adhered to alongside Muslim law, the *Sharīʿa*, each having its own sphere of influence. The Yasa was authoritative in political and criminal matters as well as in determining court ceremonies and protocols, while the *Sharīʿa* prevailed in dealing with cult, personal status and contracts.[78] Our limited knowledge of the Chinggisid *Yasa* of the thirteenth century makes it difficult to establish how close the Timurid or Uzbek laws were to the original *Yasa* (certainly the Uzbek stress on seniority as the key principle for determining succession does not conform with the Mongol succession practices of the thirteenth century), but the mere fact that these laws were sanctioned by the name of Chinggis Khan is significant enough.[79] In Moghul India, the *Yasa* (or *Tūrāh*) continued to be followed.

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[75] Cornell H. Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire: The Historian Mustafa Ali (1541-1600)* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 275-9.

[76] Halperin, *Russia and the Golden Horde*, 98-101.

[77] E.g., David M. Farquhar, "The Origins of the Manchu's Mongolian Policy," in *The Chinese World Order*, ed. J. K. Fairbank (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1968), 198-205; Pamela K. Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 311-27.

[78] McChesney, *Central Asia*, 127-8.

[79] For the original Yasa see David O. Morgan, "Yasa," *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2nd edn,

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It was often invoked to highlight the rulers' links to Chinggis Khan and Tamerlane, yet its practical use seems to have been limited to the realm of court ceremonies and etiquette.[80] While not acknowledging any adherence to the *Yasa*, Russian diplomatic practices were borrowed from the Golden Horde, i.e., from the *Yasa*.[81] The *Yasa* might have also encouraged the promulgation of the Ottoman codex of "secular" law, the *qanun*.[82]

The borrowing of other elements of Mongol statecraft was typically more utilitarian in nature. The Mongols developed efficient means of ruling an empire, a fact that was not overlooked by their successors. The provincial division initiated in Yuan China remains the basis for Chinese provinces today, for example.[83] The Mongol's imperial postal system continues to be used in China, Iran and Muscovy.[84] Mongol military institutions have had enduring legacies, not only among the nomads of Central Asia and Iran but also in China and Russia: Ming China retained the decimal division of the army, the system of military households, the personal guard of the emperor, the Yuan garrison system (*weisuo*), as well as incorporating many Mongols into its army.[85] Muscovite Russia copied the Mongol's military organization, armaments, strategies, tactics and personnel,[86] although the development of firearms eventually marginalized the Mongols' military legacy.

Mongol financial institutions were also influential in Iran, Central Asia and Russia, all of which, for example, retained the *tamgha* (custom tax), despite (or because of) its un-Islamic character. In all three realms the names of the currency (*tümen* in Iran, *kepeks* in Central Asia [and Russia] and *den'ga* in Russia) come from the Mongol period, attesting to its role in shaping currency systems.[87] Loan words also suggest that

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11 (2002), 293; David O. Morgan, "The Great Yasa of Chinggis Khan Revisited," forthcoming in *Mongols, Turks and Others*.

[80] Mansura Haidar, "The Yasai Chingizi (Tura) in the Medieval Indian Sources", in *Mongolia: Culture, Economy, Politics*, ed. R. C. Sharma *et al.* (New Delhi: Khama Publishers, 1992), 53-65.

[81] Halperin, *Russia and the Golden Horde*, 92.

[82] Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual*, 284.

[83] John Langlois, "Introduction," in *China under Mongol Rule*, ed. J. Langlois (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 1-20.

[84] Serruys, "Remains of Mongol Customs in China," 147-8; Halperin, "Russia in the Mongol Empire in Comparative Perspective," 246.

[85] Serruys, "Remains of Mongol Customs in China," 144-5; Robert Taylor, "The Yuan Origin of the Wei-so System," in *Chinese Government in Ming Times: Seven Studies*, ed. C. Hucker (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), 93-109.

[86] Halperin, "Russia in the Mongol Empire in Comparative Perspective," 250.

[87] Halperin, *Russia and the Golden Horde*, 92; Fragner, 128-30.

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other Muscovite institutions originated in the Golden Horde (e.g., *kanza* for treasury; *tarkhan* for tax exempt privileges). Ostrowski's recent assertion that Muscovite central and provincial political institutions (such as the Boyar council) were directly borrowed from the Golden Horde is more questionable, but clearly the Mongol institutional legacy was stronger in the Russian realm, where the Mongol period was influential in turning a number of city states into the nucleus of a grand Eurasian empire.[88]

In sum, the role of the nomads in the Eurasian transformations of the tenth to thirteenth centuries should not be underestimated.[89] The period saw an intensification of nomad-sedentary relations, characterized by a growing nomadic political and military superiority, which reached its height under the Mongols. Although in the Mongol case there was no equation between political superiority and cultural dominance, the Mongols left a significant impact on Eurasian cultural and political development. They actively promoted contacts and exchange between different civilizations, both within and outside of their empire, and were the principal agents of cultural transfers, selecting which particular traits were diffused in either direction. The Mongols were also influential in shaping the future boundaries, centers, and ethnic definitions of their subject territories, as well as significantly contributed to their statecraft. The most enduring legacy of Mongol rule, in terms of both legitimation concepts and ethnic identities, was in Central Asia, which must be taken into account in any discussion of Eurasian transformations.

[88] Donald Ostrowski, "The Mongol Origins of Muscovite Political Institutions," *Slavic Review*, 49 (1990), 525-42; Ostrowski, *Muscovy and the Mongols*, 36-64; see also Halperin's criticism of Ostrowski in his "Muscovite Political Institutions in the 14th century," *Kritika*, 1 (2000), 237-57 and Ostrowski's answer in the same issue, 267-304.

[89] For recent minimalist evaluations of the Mongols see, e.g., Christopher Kaplonski, "The Mongolian Impact on Eurasia: A Reassessment," in *The Role of Migration in the History of the Eurasian Steppe: Sedentary Civilizations vs. "Barbarian" and Nomad*, ed. Andrew Bell-Fialkoff (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 251-74; Michael Cook, *A Brief History of the Human Race* (New York: Norton, 2003), 271, 278.

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